

Introduction

In 2005 the Augustana College Board of Trustees approved the college's first contemporary strategic plan, *Authentically Augustana: A Strategic Plan for a Premier Liberal Arts College*. The college community, board members, alumni, faculty, administrators and staff members embraced this ambitious plan, which clarified Augustana's mission and created a clear path for the college to follow since its approval.

Following the course set by *Authentically Augustana*, the college has:

- Increased enrollment by approximately 300 students
- Increased the percentage of graduates studying internationally to more than 40% annually
- Converted and renovated Emmy Carlsson Evald Hall from residential to academic space
- Expanded and enhanced residence life with the construction of Duane R. Swanson Commons and the Dorothy Parkander Residence Center
- Developed and implemented the senior capstone experience, Senior Inquiry
- Completed exterior renovations of Old Main
- Added approximately 40 new full-time faculty and decreased the student-to-faculty ratio from 13:1 to 11:1
- Reformed the General Education program (AGES)
- Exceeded the comprehensive fund-raising goal of \$100,000,000 by nearly \$25,000,000
- Improved multicultural diversity of the student body from 7% to 10.2%
- Increased applications from 2,800 to 4,500 and improved selectivity from 84% to 64%
- Added new majors in Africana studies, anthropology, creative writing, graphic design, environmental studies, international business, engineering physics, multimedia journalism and neuroscience
- Added women's and men's varsity lacrosse and club ice hockey
- Implemented department review for academic and administrative departments
- Introduced integrated marketing communications and a new brand identity
- Conducted market research about our market position and grew the Office of Publications to the Office of Communication and Marketing
- Implemented an integrated campus information system (Datatel, Colleague) and introduced online registration and degree audit
- Developed, introduced and endorsed the Five Faith Commitments
- Developed a Campus Master Plan and five-year capital plan
- Established the Center for Vocational Reflection (CVR)
- Established the Augustana Center for Teaching and Learning (ACTL)
- Increased faculty development resources
- Developed Augie Choice, a program allowing juniors and seniors to apply up to \$2,000 toward a high-impact learning experience such as international study, collaborative or independent research, internship or service-learning project

Each of these achievements is centered on improving the experience for our students and fulfilling our mission, and as a community we should be pleased with the achievements of *Authentically Augustana*. Our focus on students and student-learning outcomes is what mobilized our community to work toward implementation of the plan, and for this Augustana College is stronger today.

Perhaps what should inspire the most pride is that we set out to follow a plan and did so. This is not always the case with strategic planning, or throughout higher education in general. We have proven to ourselves that we can and will follow a plan we believe in, particularly when the emphasis is on improving the experience for our students.

Authentically Augustana: A Strategic Plan for a Premier Liberal Arts College is now more than 85% complete. The plan provided a "playbook" for decision-making at all levels of the college, ranging from resource allocation to curricular

design. It has provided leadership with meaningful guidance at the governance, administrative and functional levels, and college leaders have referenced the plan with great care in executing strategy over the last five and a half years.

Given the continued challenges facing Augustana and the higher education community as a whole, we should not be content with completion of a plan that began more than five years ago. Today, we find ourselves in a position to ask, “What’s next?”

Bringing *Authentically Augustana* into the Future

There are good reasons to consider a new plan to build upon the many successes of *Authentically Augustana*. A new plan might be described as a “bridge” between the present and the next comprehensive planning process (three to five years).

The case for a new plan is rooted in: 1.) The successful completion and implementation of major objectives of *Authentically Augustana*, along with a need to assess those achievements and examine their impact; 2.) Significant changes in the external environment—such as the shift in demographics of the college-bound population, and a severe economic recession that has altered families’ ability and willingness to pay for college—that must be acknowledged and managed in the coming years.

In addition, as we look forward, we must seek to measure not only our achievements and what we have, but also what we do and hope to do. A new plan should measure and assess our actions and how effective we are at fulfilling our mission.

Compelling us to look ahead are several changes in our external environment that were not fully considered in 2005. These changes include demographic shifts in student enrollments; the new economy; our own financial realities, and changing patterns in the consumption and delivery of higher education. We have begun discussing these changes and addressing certain aspects, but the changes are significant enough to call for full campus awareness and engagement. In short, the success of our strategic plan—combined with external conditions not fully considered previously—necessitates a focused yet measured effort to plan our course through the unsettled times we face in the next three to five years.

The Strategic Planning Task Force has responded to this charge of the President of the College (Appendix 1) by leading a planning process (Appendix 2) that will provide a bridge from *Authentically Augustana* to a new stage in the college’s strategic plan. This process has reinforced the direction of *Authentically Augustana* and seeks to:

- Affirm and strengthen our mission
- Advance our reputation and market position as a mid-sized liberal arts college
- Identify and stabilize/manage the risks to the college
- Further enhance the student learning experience, consistent with *Authentically Augustana*
- Highlight our strengths and distinctions
- Engage and mobilize our community and others who love the college
- Emphasize measurable outcomes and results

Authentically Augustana—Part 2: Affirm our Mission, Assure our Future and Assess our Results

The course of our strategic plan will build upon the successes of *Authentically Augustana: A Strategic Plan for a Premier Liberal Arts College* and the short-term initiatives we have undertaken in the past two years to adapt to the economic downturn, and will assess and monitor our effectiveness as an organization.

Three defining characteristics of *Affirm, Assure and Assess* include:

- An emphasis on results and using new ways to assess our effectiveness in fulfilling our mission
- An emphasis on the realities and risks we face as institution
- Prioritization of realistic strategies to respond to and minimize our risks

Affirm our Mission and Assure our Future

The work of the Strategic Planning Task Force has been to affirm Augustana's mission:

Augustana College, rooted in the liberal arts and sciences and a Lutheran expression of the Christian faith, is committed to offering a challenging education that develops qualities of mind, spirit and body necessary for a rewarding life of leadership and service in a diverse and changing world.

Augustana's mission is timeless. It remains at the heart of what we do and why we are, and it is a mission to which the college remains faithful.

In addition, the Strategic Planning Task Force affirms the values of the college as outlined in *Authentically Augustana*. The values that guide what we do, and what we seek in our community today and tomorrow, include a commitment to:

- Remain accountable to our students and our mission
- Ensure a student-centered approach and culture
- Foster critical thinking, creativity and an active life of the mind
- Encourage both intellectual and spiritual development
- Embrace diversity, civility, integrity and respect for others
- Respect academic freedom and traditions of academic governance
- Cherish academic excellence
- Act collaboratively within the college while seeking partnership with the community

Within the context of this mission and these values, we have established a strategic direction for the next three years to do the following:

- Prepare our students to stand out
- Innovate recruitment and retention
- Enhance our campus
- Optimize, support and diversify our workforce
- Strengthen shared governance and communication
- Celebrate and strengthen our surroundings
- Improve our financial viability
- Advance our reputation

Strategic Imperative 1: PREPARE OUR STUDENTS TO STAND OUT

As an exclusively undergraduate residential college, our strength resides in our ability to offer one-on-one instruction and get to know each student's personal goals. In addition, because of our size we are better equipped to advise and mentor more effectively than larger institutions. Augustana now is in a position to ensure that students have access to high-impact learning opportunities; are cognizant of how these opportunities might advance their education and professional lives; are deliberate in making choices; and can articulate the outcomes of their learning experiences. Providing faculty and staff with the training and time for excellent advising, mentoring and one-on-one teaching, combined with our sustained emphasis on high-impact experiences, creates a powerful and transformational learning environment that distinguishes Augustana from peer institutions.

Augustana will prepare students to stand out to employers and graduate schools by centering learning—inside and outside the classroom—on high-impact and hands-on learning experiences.

To accomplish this we will pursue the following strategic initiatives:

- Improve mentoring and advising to ensure all students participate in high-impact learning experiences
- Ensure Augie Choice planning, experience and reflection focus on high-impact learning practices
- Develop a reflective e-portfolio system documenting high-impact learning experiences (coordinated by the Center for Teaching and Learning)

Our goals include:

- Providing faculty and staff with the necessary time, training and resources to engage in more effective mentoring and advising
- Re-conceptualizing our advising system to develop a mentoring/one-on-one teaching program that highlights high-impact learning experiences and the positive outcomes of an Augustana education and makes advising a priority
- Increasing awareness of high-impact learning experiences
- Improving the ability for each graduate to discuss the positive impact of the Augustana experience
- Refining the Augie Choice application, evaluation and follow-up to ensure effective documentation and the benefits and outcomes associated with high-impact learning experiences
- Expanding surveys of first-year students and seniors to measure the results of high-impact learning experiences and strengthened advising

We will be successful when we:

- Plan for and implement a reflective e-portfolio over the next five years
- Increase participation in high-impact learning experiences
- Increase participation among both staff and faculty in advising/mentoring students
- See improved results in NSSE questions related to high-impact learning compared to benchmark and comparable institutions
- See “overall student satisfaction” ratings higher in First-Year and Senior Surveys
- See “satisfaction with advising” ratings higher in the First-Year and Senior Surveys

This strategic imperative is critical to Augustana's future and responds to the risk of being unable to prepare our graduates to stand out to employers and graduate schools.

Strategic Imperative 2: INNOVATE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

The student body—its size, diversity, academic qualifications, achievements and aspirations—is central to Augustana's identity. Like many colleges in our peer group, we are tuition-driven, which means the success and composition of our enrollment shapes decisions at every level of operation: from class size to support services, from budgeting to beds on campus. While enrollment success—recruitment and retention—is a shared responsibility, our future depends upon innovation in our practices and dedication to improving student persistence and understanding of the value of an Augustana education.

Augustana will develop recruitment and retention plans for an enrollment of 2,500 that respond to shifting demographics and a changed economy.

To accomplish this we will pursue the following strategic initiatives:

- Sustain market share in primary market by increasing multicultural recruitment efforts and strengthening our presence and reputation in the Chicago area
- Increase outreach to, enrollment of and graduation of multicultural students consistent with population trends in core markets
- More effectively use market research and technology to reach all prospective students and specifically target outreach marketing to out-of-state, international and other students less likely to visit campus
- Develop a comprehensive academic success plan to systematically improve retention

Our goals include:

- Establishing a regional Office of Admissions in the Chicago area
- Maintaining proportionate enrollment from Chicago "collar" counties
- Systematically improving academic success and retention, particularly first to second year, for all sub-populations
- Implementing a comprehensive plan for retention and academic success
- Increasing contact with college choice influencers
- Implementing cost-effective ways to reach students and influence "stealth" inquiries and applications
- More effectively communicating and targeting our message about the value of an Augustana education
- Decreasing our dependence on offering financial assistance beyond demonstrated need

We will be successful when we:

- Open a regional Office of Admissions in the Chicago area
- Maintain 56-58% of total enrollment from Chicago "collar" counties
- Increase enrollment of out-of-state and underrepresented students
- Systematically increase retention rates at all levels and with all sub-populations
- Complete comprehensive plan for retention and academic success by January 2012
- Increase representation of multicultural and underrepresented populations in applicant, accepted and enrolled pool of students
- See "quality of advising and academic support" ratings higher on First-year and Senior Survey
- See "satisfaction with value of an Augustana education" ratings higher on First-year and Senior Survey
- Decrease non-need-based financial assistance and unfunded discount

Recruitment and retention must be a central focus for the college in the next five years. This strategic imperative responds to the risk of being unable to maintain full-time, on-campus enrollment of 2,500 students from diverse backgrounds without significantly increasing the tuition discount rate.

Strategic Imperative 3: ENHANCE OUR CAMPUS

As a residential college, the physical plant provides the foundation for all we do. Continued investment in maintenance and modernization is essential to remain competitive and maintain our enrollment. Completing the renovation and restoration of Old Main remains our top priority for capital investments through 2012. We also must address the estimated \$20 million in identified maintenance that has been deferred over the years. Our technology infrastructure must grow and become more secure if we are to provide the kinds of learning environments that result in student achievement and excellence. We need a degree of flexibility to fund selected initiatives without total dependence on timing and rates of individual campaign contributions. Lastly, we must increasingly recognize the requirements and potential benefits of energy and environmental sensitivity.

Augustana will operate and maintain facilities in a manner consistent with a high-quality learning and living environment, and will improve facilities when deemed strategically important to provide the best learning experience for our current students and to attract prospective students in an increasingly competitive market.

To accomplish this we will pursue the following strategic initiatives:

- Funding and finishing renovation and restoration of Old Main
- Funding and building a Center for Student Life
- Reserving resources in operating budget to help fund capital enhancements, including Information Technology (IT) infrastructure
- Finalizing and implementing a Five-year Capital Improvement Plan

Our goals include:

- Completing final phases of the Old Main renovation on time and within budget
- Developing a construction and financing plan for a Center for Student Life
- Improving the security of, access to, and reliability of our campus network
- Developing new resources to fund selected capital initiatives in the Five-year Capital Plan
- Increasing campus aesthetic appeal
- Prioritizing identified maintenance projects according to best practices
- Seeking LEED certification of Silver or the equivalent when undertaking new capital projects or extensive renovations
- Systematically implementing a prioritized set of capital improvements according to our Five-year Capital Improvement Plan

We will be successful when we:

- Finalize, approve and implement a Five-year Capital Improvement Plan
- Complete fund-raising for Old Main by December 31, 2011
- Complete renovation of Old Main in 2012-13
- Annually, commit \$4.6 million to physical plant improvements
- Achieve LEED Silver or the equivalent on new capital projects or extensive renovations
- Systematically reduce identified maintenance

This strategic imperative is critical to Augustana's future and responds to the risk of being unable to adequately address issues related to our physical plant, including technology infrastructure and deferred maintenance, in a timely manner.

Strategic Imperative 4: OPTIMIZE, SUPPORT AND DIVERSIFY OUR WORKFORCE

Augustana's employee base is its most precious resource and much is expected of the workforce. While much progress has been made in recent years to diversify the student body, a greater racial diversity among faculty, staff and administration has been more challenging. We must be more direct and accountable in crafting a workforce that reflects our community, the region and the nation. We also must do everything possible to value, support and develop our human resource base within our abilities and financial capacity. We also must strengthen each employee's understanding of our core values and what it means to serve Augustana College. By more intentionally seeking diversity, and better supporting and developing our workforce, Augustana will emerge as an employer leader in the community, region and higher education marketplace.

Augustana will foster a work environment that values community, racial and other types of diversity, collaboration and innovation, while shaping the workforce to optimize productivity and accountability.

To accomplish this we will pursue the following strategic initiatives:

- Optimizing the size and structure of our workforce to balance our educational goals with our financial resources
- Building accountability into efforts to improve diversity among our applicant pools and workforce, and improve retention of multicultural employees
- Improving the work environment for all employees, including those who work part-time
- Developing a competitive compensation system that acknowledges experience, performance and responsibilities

Our goals include:

- Attracting and retaining a more diverse workforce with multicultural employees at all levels
- Optimizing the size of the workforce
- Motivating optimal productivity, high morale and mutual respect through better support of the workforce
- Improving campus climate and support for an increasingly diverse workforce
- Compensating employees at fair market value for similar organizations and to recognize work and experience
- Developing a shared sense of accountability within the workforce
- Providing an annual Diversity Report to the board and campus community

We will be successful when we:

- Increase diversity in all employment areas: faculty, staff and administration
- Assign responsibility to monitor, report and actively improve recruitment and retention of diverse employees
- Complete a comprehensive study of our workforce to determine optimal size by September of 2012. The President of the College will appoint a task force to study the faculty and academic affairs. Human Resources will coordinate the study of the administration and staff.
- Complete a comprehensive study of compensation
- Provide an annual report on our efforts and results to become a more racially diverse workforce

This strategic imperative is critical to Augustana's future and responds to the risk of being unable to successfully recruit, motivate, diversify and develop our human resource base.

Strategic Imperative 5: STRENGTHEN SHARED GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNICATION

This strategic imperative will formalize the positive practices of effective communication and good shared governance, which in the past have enabled the college to successfully address significant challenges faced by higher education institutions. The recent national recession, for example, demonstrated the college leadership's ability to nimbly respond to negative external pressures. The tactics outlined will incorporate the successful strategies employed during the economic crisis, particularly those which promoted greater awareness and involvement of all constituencies. Incorporating the identified tactics into the operational and strategic planning development process is intended to strengthen all campus stakeholders' understanding of current college goals and issues related to good shared governance.

Augustana will strengthen its shared governance and open communication practices to ensure shared and timely decision-making in response to changes in external conditions impacting Augustana and higher education in general.

To accomplish this we will pursue the following strategic initiatives:

- Develop information resources to educate and communicate to the Augustana community on campus governance, policies and key initiatives, as well as provide opportunities for feedback
- Create and encourage opportunities for informal connections and social interaction to facilitate communication among constituencies
- Develop and promote clear and efficient, outcome-oriented "dashboards" of key indicators measuring the institution's progress toward the identified goals of the college (Appendix 3)
- Create a presidential advisory committee or council responsible for advising the president on matters related to shared governance, and fostering open communications among all college constituencies in furtherance of good shared governance

Our goals include:

- Deepening the understanding of Augustana's shared governance, committee structures and decision processes, as well as current initiatives
- Fostering an environment of collegiality among college constituencies by strengthening the sense of community and encouraging informal communication channels
- Communicating the college's broader common goals, progress of these goals and the criteria used to measure progress to the college stakeholders
- Ensuring sustained accountability towards the assessment and reporting of initiatives related to progress in achieving our established institutional goals
- Supporting and developing faculty leadership for roles in shared governance and leadership

We will be successful when:

- We develop resources to assess and communicate high-impact goals of the college
- The college community and interested stakeholders are updated three times a year on progress toward achieving the objectives of the strategic plan
- Stakeholders are periodically surveyed to measure awareness of strategic issues facing the college and governance
- Attendance and participation in governance increases
- The work and values of all stakeholders are properly aligned

This strategic imperative is critical to Augustana's future and responds to the risk of leadership being unable to respond quickly and proactively to external conditions.

Strategic Imperative 6: CELEBRATE AND STRENGTHEN OUR SURROUNDINGS

Our neighborhood is an important asset, and it is increasingly clear that we should do more to celebrate and strengthen our neighborhood. Being a good neighbor is a core value for the college and finding new ways to view our neighborhood as a “laboratory” for high-impact learning experiences, while working to attract new residents and business must be a priority now and for the foreseeable future. As our neighborhood goes, so does the college.

Augustana will extend its reach within the neighborhood and broader community.

To accomplish this we will pursue the following strategic initiatives:

- Strengthen the residential vitality of our neighborhood
- Promote the commercial vitality of our neighborhood
- Encourage the economic vitality of the region

Our goals include:

- Investigating the possibility of investing resources in the improvement of housing stock, the strengthening of Longfellow Liberal Arts Elementary School, and the nurturing of strategic partnerships with neighborhood institutions
- Improving business activity in the neighborhood by engaging human and other resources with business associations, partnerships and initiatives designed to increase economic activity around Augustana’s campus
- Positioning Augustana as an important partner in regional economic development through internships, research and other partnerships with businesses, government bodies and other economic development agencies
- Investing college resources in the neighborhood to encourage employee homeownership
- Prioritizing Longfellow Liberal Arts Elementary School within neighborhood engagements
- Increasing attractiveness of the neighborhood for new residents and commercial investment
- Increasing attractiveness of the region for Augustana graduates
- Strengthening relationships with Rock Island Economic Growth Corporation, Development Association of Rock Island, Renaissance Rock Island, and other organizations focused on improving our city’s neighborhoods
- Strengthening relationship with the Rock Island Arsenal
- Furthering the development of partnerships with Quad Cities First, Quad City Chamber of Commerce, Greater Quad Cities Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Intellectual Properties Institute, and other organizations focused on improving the greater Quad Cities
- Developing a plan for an “anchor project” in a neighborhood location
- Seeking grant funding at state, federal and local levels for neighborhood improvement
- Using a presidentially appointed task force to develop a targeted plan for continued progress in this area

We will be successful when:

- We wisely and strategically commit and invest the college’s financial resources in our neighborhood
- The number of employees living in the neighborhood increases
- The number of graduates remaining in the area increases
- The median home value in the neighborhood increases
- Enrollment and standardized test performance at Longfellow Liberal Arts Elementary increase
- The number and quality of internships and high-impact learning experiences focused on the neighborhood and region increases
- The number and quality of businesses in College Hill District and neighborhood increases
- The number of student/faculty research projects benefiting the neighborhood and region increases
- A neighborhood “anchor project” is completed
- We have a tactical plan for the college’s role in our neighborhood by May of 2012

This strategic imperative is critical to Augustana’s future and responds to the risk of being unable to respond to adverse changes in our neighborhood and/or the broader community of Rock Island and the Quad Cities.

Strategic Imperative 7: IMPROVE OUR FINANCIAL VIABILITY

Augustana College has a history of strong fiscal health and expert management. In recent years the college's finances enabled operational flexibility despite unfavorable broader economic conditions. As part of our future, we must ensure the college's financial health as a measure of delivering on our mission. We must continue to evaluate ways to reduce expenses and become more efficient and innovative throughout our operation. The markers of strong financial health as described above are the markers of the finest colleges in the nation.

Augustana will develop an operating plan that ensures our ability to deliver our mission, measures returns on new investments, explores methods of increasing revenue through traditional and non-traditional means, manages costs and ensures strong financial health.

To accomplish this we will pursue the following strategic initiatives:

- Reserve resources to fund identified maintenance and capital projects through operations
- Reduce the unfunded tuition discount rate for incoming and continuing students by .5% annually
- Manage the college's endowment to sustain support for operations
- Establish an innovation fund through expert management, operational efficiency and cost containment
- Establish and track an annual goal for gifts to the endowment and capital projects

Our goals include:

- Funding capital improvements according to a Five-year Capital Improvement Plan
- Improving physical plant function and aesthetics
- Strengthening our statement of position/balance sheet
- Increasing net revenue per student
- Developing new resources to fund operations and capital investments
- Reserving up to 100% of annualized depreciation of physical plant
- Establishing guidelines and financial targets for new programs/initiatives
- By May 2012, developing a plan to increase gifts to the endowment, including an investigation of the feasibility of increasing the endowment to three times the operating budget

We will be successful when:

- Current bond rating is maintained
- The "quality of facilities" ratings improve on the annual Senior Survey
- Our standing improves versus Moody's BAA1 plant investment ratios and ELCA peers
- Our Five-year Capital Plan is completed on time and within budget
- Identified maintenance is reduced
- Endowment investment returns by category compared to industry benchmarks improves
- Innovation Reserve Fund of \$500,000 is established within five years
- Net revenue per student versus ELCA and peer school groupings increases

This strategic imperative is critical to Augustana's future and responds to the risk of being unable to maintain the necessary financial resources to deliver our mission/program.

Strategic Imperative 8: ADVANCE AUGUSTANA'S REPUTATION

For 150 years, Augustana College has challenged and prepared students for meaningful lives and careers in a complex, changing world. Increasingly for Augustana (and colleges in general), it is crucial that we foster the ability of our constituencies—including those on campus, in the region and across the nation—to recognize and articulate the value of this excellent liberal arts education and the distinctions that set us apart. We must actively build a culture of high-profile academic success, and we must more readily communicate these successes to our audiences.

We will refine Augustana's value proposition and advance the college's reputation by emphasizing outcomes and ensuring all members of our community can articulate and promote our successes and distinctions.

To accomplish this we will pursue the following strategic initiatives:

- Strengthen and integrate our abilities to gather and share information on graduates' successes
- Refine new initiatives fund to institutionalize experiential and high-impact learning opportunities
- Pursue high-profile recognition for students and faculty, and capitalize on existing traditions of success
- Intensify efforts to develop word-of-mouth marketing and promotion of the Augustana brand within the community

Our goals include:

- Better tracking alumni data and communicating the successes of recent graduates to internal and external constituencies
- More effectively describing the benefits and results of an Augustana education and our distinctions
- Encouraging and supporting creative learning opportunities with community partners (e.g., Texas Medical Center model)
- Creating or reviving a research enterprise that solicits projects from government, non-profit and community organizations
- Creating a funding resource that supports faculty and student research in areas of greatest potential strategic impact (e.g., Upper Mississippi River Center)
- Better mentoring students for awards such as Rhodes, Fulbright, NSF dissertation, Goldwater, etc.
- Creating Augustana Academic All-Americans Society to advance our distinction in this area
- Creating Augustana "value" web page linking student learning outcome data with news and stories
- Fostering a culture of acknowledgement for student, faculty, administrator and board member achievement
- Assisting campus community in articulating key messages (e.g., communication and marketing website, visual displays of success in campus buildings, meetings and existing web-based newsletters, etc.)

We will be successful when:

- The percentage of alumni sharing information with alumni relations and subsequent alumni information on website and promotional materials increases
- Career and graduate school preparation response ratings on surveys (e.g. Dehne, Senior Survey) improves
- Earned media coverage for alumni success, faculty and student research, and All-Americans increases
- Number of Senior Inquiry projects meeting local research needs increases
- Number of faculty engaged in local/regional research projects increases
- Percentage of students reporting participation in research increases on Senior Survey
- Number of students applying for and receiving high-profile academic awards increases
- Integrated marketing and marketing communications plan is updated and implemented to reflect the college's distinctions, results and strategic direction
- We more effectively promote and demonstrate the benefits and advantages of Augie Choice

This strategic imperative is critical to Augustana's future and responds to the risk of being unable to demonstrate Augustana's value, advance our reputation and earn positive recognition.

Priorities for Implementation of *Affirm, Assure and Assess*

Since January 2011, the framework for an addendum to *Authentically Augustana* (Appendix 4), which was developed by eight design teams made up of diverse stakeholders, has been presented to the Board of Trustees, discussed by the President's Cabinet, distributed to all campus stakeholders and presented in a variety of settings. While there has been strong endorsement of the areas representing the college's strategic imperatives, there also has been some concern expressed that "we might be trying to do too much too fast." In an effort to respond to the valuable feedback about the initiatives identified, the Strategic Planning Task Force offered the following prioritization of the initiatives to undertake in the coming years.

Signature Initiatives (Immediate Focus)

Prepare our students to stand out

- Improve mentoring and advising to ensure all students participate in high-impact learning experiences
- To support this tactic: 1) Ensure Augie Choice planning, experience and reflection focus on high-impact learning practices; 2) Develop a reflective e-portfolio system documenting high-impact learning experiences

Innovate recruitment and retention

- Increase outreach to, enrollment of and graduation of multicultural students consistent with population trends in core markets
- Sustain market share in primary market by increasing multicultural recruitment efforts and strengthening our presence and reputation in the Chicago area

Enhance our campus

- Fund and finish renovation and restoration of Old Main
- Fund and build a Center for Student Life
- Reserve resources in operating budget to help fund capital enhancements
- Finalize and implement a Five-year Capital Improvement Plan

Optimize, support and diversify our workforce

- Optimize the size and structure of our workforce to balance educational goals with financial resources
- Build accountability into efforts to improve diversity among our applicant pools and workforce, and improve hiring and retention of multicultural employees

Strengthen shared governance, leadership and communication

- Strengthen communication and shared governance on campus; foster a culture of alignment through which all campus stakeholders are aware of and pursue common goals as defined by an outcome-oriented measure of institutional effectiveness and mission fulfillment
- Create a presidential advisory committee or council responsible for advising the president on matters related to shared governance, and fostering open communications among all college constituencies in furtherance of good shared governance

Celebrate and strengthen our surroundings

- Promote the commercial vitality of our neighborhood

Improve our financial viability

- Fund identified maintenance and contribute to capital projects through operating resources
- Reduce the tuition discount rate for incoming and continuing students by .5% annually

Advance Augustana's reputation

- Pursue high-profile recognition for Augustana students and faculty, and capitalize on existing traditions of success
- Strengthen and integrate our abilities to gather and share information on graduates' successes

Assessing Our Results

In addition to developing a strategic direction for Augustana for the coming years, the Strategic Planning Task Force was asked to “develop an outcome-oriented dashboard” to assess our results and to shift focus from measuring “inputs” exclusively. This has been described by some as moving away from measuring what we have, to measuring what we do and how effectively we do it. This is one of the most important and transformative elements of the process and represents a significant step toward a future of holding ourselves accountable, creating a shared sense of accomplishment, proving our results and reinforcing our value within the higher education community.

Historically, building or refining assessment tools to focus on outcomes rather than inputs has been a challenge for institutions of higher education—and Augustana has been no exception. The 2005 strategic plan established a “Dashboard of Indicators” that predominantly focused on our financial resources and other predictable measures of institutional quality. This dashboard has been and will continue to be a valuable tool. But it is necessary to move beyond our current list of key performance indicators toward developing a tool that can measure areas of strength and weakness; demonstrate growth and opportunity for more growth; allow meaningful benchmark comparisons with other institutions; and identify lines of responsibility to promote shared accountability for the college’s lasting success.

It is time for us to refocus our efforts on outcomes and results. The Strategic Planning Task Force has developed criteria by which we can assess the results of our efforts in the areas of academic programming, operations and campus culture.

Areas we will assess

Four areas of institutional effectiveness and mission fulfillment have been identified to include:

1. Educational Quality—The extent to which the college is successful in its mission—to develop qualities of mind, spirit and body necessary for a rewarding life of leadership and service in a diverse and changing world—will be measured through educational experiences, outputs and outcomes.
2. Program Relevance—The extent to which programs, services and activities are perceived to meet the needs and expectations of students should be measured during and after the college years.
3. Organizational Culture—The organizational climate is a measure of the satisfaction of faculty, staff and other stakeholders, and the quality of their relationships with the college.
4. Process Efficiency—Operations and the financial dimension of the college will be measured for effectiveness and efficiency.

Results we will assess

Within the area of Educational Quality, we identify the following as criteria to assess whether we are effective and are fulfilling our mission:

EXPERIENCES

- Participation rates in “high-impact educational activities” (Senior Inquiry, international study, internships, research, service learning and community outreach)
- Percentage of students indicating they “often” have serious conversations with people whose ethnicity, race or values/beliefs differ from their own (NSSE)
- Percentage of students indicating the college encourages contact among students from different backgrounds “quite a bit” (NSSE)
- Percentage of courses in which students indicate an appropriate level of “progress on relevant objectives” (IDEA reports)
- Comparison benchmarks for Level of Academic Challenge, Active and Collaborative Learning, and Supportive Environment (NSSE)
- Percentage of students indicating they would “probably” or “definitely” choose to attend Augustana if they had to do it again (Senior Survey)
- Level of satisfaction with advising (First-year and Senior Survey)

OUTPUTS

- Retention rates
- 4-year graduation rates
- Rates of gainful employment (full-time, related to major)
- Graduate and professional school placement rates

OUTCOMES

- Critical thinking growth (CLA, CAAP)
- Intercultural competence growth (MGUDS, GPI)
- Leadership development (instrument TBD)
- Lifelong learning growth (Need for Cognition Scale)
- Integrative and innovative thinking growth (e-portfolio)
- Reflective thinking growth (e-portfolio and/or Senior Inquiry)

Within the area of Program Relevance, we identify the following as criteria to assess whether we are effective and are fulfilling our mission:

INTERNAL RELEVANCE

- Departmental credit production (major, minor and general education)
- Participation patterns in majors and minors
- Participation patterns in clubs and activities
- Percentage of academic programs that have developed a curriculum map that demonstrates a balance of emphases on results/outcomes
- Percentage of co-curricular programs that have developed a learning assessment plan
- Reasonable ROI and mission alignment resulting in demonstrated worth for resource-intensive programs (curricular and co-curricular) (instrument and value system TBD)

EXTERNAL RELEVANCE

- Graduate school placement rates
- Levels of alumni satisfaction with Augustana education

Within the area of Organizational Culture, we identify the following as criteria to assess whether we are effective and are fulfilling our mission:

- Faculty satisfaction (HERI)
- Staff, administration and board satisfaction (internal instrument TBD)
- Level of participation in wellness initiatives
- Length of service to the college
- Employee/stakeholder satisfaction and participation in governance
- Percentage of departments with professional development plans for employees
- Participation rates in performance appraisal and reviews
- Increase of diversity in workplace
- Increased name recognition and brand loyalty (measure TBD)

Within the area of Process Efficiency, we identify the following as criteria to assess whether we are effective and are fulfilling our mission:

- Sustained budget through proper stewardship
- Annual increases in operating revenues
- Optimized recruitment, admissions and enrollment processes (funnel and first-year student survey)
- Increases in proportion of accepted students for whom Augustana is first choice (annual ASQ data)
- Evidence of productive and efficient faculty committee work
- Evidence of a safe and risk-free environment

We believe these criteria will provide a more accurate assessment as to whether our resources are aligned properly with the outcomes we seek. This is brave new territory for Augustana and has the potential to distinguish the college from others less inclined toward assessment and evaluation of outcomes.

The Assessment Process

Communicating our Institutional Effectiveness

As part of developing the model to assess institutional effectiveness, we've attempted to develop roles in implementation and assessment for various stakeholders. These roles provide direction and align expectations for ensuring and monitoring results. The framework suggests which tools and processes may be most effective for each group, which will allow each stakeholder to place his or her focus on the right measures, etc.

In addition to assigning roles to particular stakeholders, we will introduce a new initiative to report on Institutional Effectiveness and Mission Fulfillment on an annual basis. The report will be a collaboration of the Vice President of the College, the Office of Academic Affairs, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment, and the Augustana Center for Teaching and Learning. This report will be made available each October beginning fall of 2011 to all stakeholders, including the public, and will serve as a "report card" on our effectiveness as an institution in fulfilling our mission.

The annual report on Institutional Effectiveness and Mission Fulfillment will represent a new path for the college, and will demonstrate a commitment to transparency and accountability that is seldom seen in the higher education community. In a new way for Augustana, this report also will align strategy and expectations throughout all levels at the college.

Defining a Set of Peers for Benchmarking Resources

Because we often look to other colleges for affirmation or comparison, we have identified a group of peer colleges (Appendix 5) that may be helpful when we engage in discussion about resources, both human and financial.

In identifying this group of appropriately comparable institutions, our goal was to create a list of colleges applying a relatively similar level of human and financial resources to the undergraduate education of a student body with a similar enrollment and profile. To achieve this goal, we examined the IPEDS publicly available data from commonly defined data that all institutions are required to submit. We selected several criteria across which we tried to balance a variable degree of difference within approximate margins of similarity.

To approximate similarity in human and financial resources, we chose:

- Endowment assets per FTE
- Total price
- Student-to-faculty ratio
- Carnegie classification

To approximate similarity in enrollment size, we chose:

- Total enrollment
- Total full-time undergraduate enrollment
- Total part-time undergraduate enrollment

To approximate similarity in the profile of enrolled students, we chose:

- Carnegie enrollment profile
- Percent of undergraduate enrollment between ages 18-24
- ACT 25th percentile score
- ACT 75th percentile score
- Full-time first-to-second-year retention rate
- Total cohort graduation rate

In each case, decisions were made to establish acceptable ranges and then to compare institutions within one range but outside other ranges. Through a careful and iterative process, a list of 10 institutions emerged that were comparable overall. Some are nearly identical along almost every factor considered, while others fall slightly to one side or the other of Augustana but are similar enough to provide some useful range within this comparison group.

Adopting this set of peers will aid our planning and understanding of our position, as well as the outcomes we can anticipate given our resources.

Conclusion

Implementation of part 2 of *Authentically Augustana—Affirm our Mission, Assure our Future and Assess Our Results*—will position Augustana College as a leader in undergraduate education. This new phase of our strategic plan will require a financial commitment as outlined in Appendix 6. The primary purpose of the plan is to align our work at a time when all stakeholders must be actively engaged in ensuring the college thrives into the future.

For 151 years, Augustana has fulfilled its mission. This mission—to educate students for successful, meaningful lives as citizens and leaders in a world always changing—is one we continue to believe in and uphold. The strength of this mission and the momentum of *Authentically Augustana* have established a foundation for greater excellence as we meet greater challenges. We believe success for Augustana students is based upon the following emphases.

Our emphasis on high-impact learning experiences that result in greater achievements, with keen devotion to advising and mentoring, will prepare our graduates to stand out and find their best success in an increasingly competitive world.

Our emphasis on supporting, diversifying and promoting the best success of our workforce, with strengthened shared governance through leadership and communication, will ensure our college community is aligned in meeting our mutual goals.

Our emphasis on enhancing our beautiful campus and our distinctive surroundings, and sustaining our financial viability into the future, will reinforce our strength as good stewards of our resources.

Finally, our emphasis on maintaining an optimal enrollment of high-quality students, and promoting our reputation within the higher education community and for the families we serve, will assure Augustana College meets a future of many challenges with even more success.